

Message Text

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ORIGIN HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 VO-05 CA-01
INSE-00 /103 R

DRAFTED BY HA/ORM:LROSENBLATT:CML
APPROVED BY HA - PMDERIAN
HA/ORM - SCLOWMAN
EA - FBENNETT (SUBS)
EUR - LFUERTH

-----004831 231851Z /53

P R 231810Z DEC 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMCONSUL FUKUOKA
AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 306257

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: LETTER FROM ASSISTANT
SECRETARY DERIAN TO FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN
REF: LONDON 20502 (NOTAL)

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN HAS SENT A LETTER TO
FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN ASKING FOR CONSIDERATION OF A
SMALL, MONTHLY QUOTA FOR INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEES TO
ASSIST IN MEETING THE CURRENT EMERGENCY. TEXT OF LETTER
DATED DEC. 23 FOLLOWS. LETTER REFLECTS DERIAN-OWEN TALK
AT RECENT NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING IN BRUSSELS.

2. I FOUND OUR DISCUSSION PRODUCTIVE AND HOPE TO
CONTINUE WITH YOU A DIALOGUE ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES OF
MUTUAL IMPORTANCE.

MEANWHILE THERE IS A PARTICULARLY TRAGIC HUMANITARIAN
PROBLEM ON WHICH WE TOUCHED AND ABOUT WHICH I WOULD
LIKE TO PROVIDE YOU ADDITIONAL DETAILS. IN THE LAST
TWO AND A HALF YEARS OVER 200,000 REFUGEES HAVE FLED
THE THREE INDOCHINESE COUNTRIES OF VIETNAM, CAMBODIA
AND LAOS. CURRENTLY REFUGEES CONTINUE TO ESCAPE AT HIGH
RATES - OVER 2,500 MONTHLY BY LAND (MOSTLY FROM LAOS)

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INTO THAILAND AND OVER 1,500 MONTHLY BY SEA (MOSTLY
FROM VIETNAM) TO VARIOUS PORTS OF TEMPORARY SAFEHAVEN
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

DESPITE SIGNIFICANT ACCEPTANCES OF INDOCHINESE
REFUGEES BY FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES, ABOUT 100,000
REFUGEES REMAIN STRANDED IN CAMPS IN THAILAND ALONG
WITH ALMOST 5,000 BOAT REFUGEES WHO ARE STUCK ELSEWHERE
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WHO HAVE ARRIVED SINCE AUGUST 11 AT
WHICH TIME THE LAST U.S. PROGRAM FOR BOAT REFUGEES
BECAME OVERSUBSCRIBED.

THE SITUATION OF BOAT REFUGEES IS PARTICULARLY
PRECARIOUS. IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY GUARANTEE THAT BOAT
REFUGEES WILL BE PERMANENTLY RESETTLED ELSEWHERE,
COUNTRIES OF TEMPORARY SAFEHAVEN ARE RELUCTANT TO CON-
TINUE TO PERMIT BOAT REFUGEES TO LAND. THAILAND HAS
COMMENCED A POLICY OF TOWING BOAT REFUGEES OUT TO SEA.
OTHER COUNTRIES MAY FOLLOW SUIT. PASSING MERCHANT
SHIPS ARE ALSO RELUCTANT TO PICK UP REFUGEES FOR FEAR
THAT THE LACK OF PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT OFFERS WILL
MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO UNLOAD THE HUMAN CARGO.

THE UNITED STATES IS WORKING TOWARD AN EMERGENCY MEASURE TO ACCEPT BOAT REFUGEES OVER THE NEXT MONTHS UNTIL A LONG TERM AMERICAN ACCEPTANCE POLICY CAN BE WORKED OUT WITH THE CONGRESS. IN OUR EFFORTS WITH CONGRESS TO GAIN A CONSENSUS ON A GENEROUS LONG-TERM AMERICAN POLICY IT WILL BE VITAL TO SHOW THAT OTHER NATIONS ARE SHARING THE BURDEN AND THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY REMAINS INTERESTED IN THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES.

ACCORDINGLY I WOULD ASK YOU AND YOUR GOVERNMENT TO URGENTLY CONSIDER TWO ACTIONS: 1) IMMEDIATE ENACTMENT OF A MONTHLY QUOTA FOR BOAT REFUGEES. EVEN IF SMALL, THIS MONTHLY INTAKE OF BOAT REFUGEES WILL ALLOW THE

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UNHCR GREATER LEVERAGE IN TRYING TO KEEP THE DOORS OPEN TO BOAT REFUGEES IN COUNTRIES OF TEMPORARY SAFEHAVEN. 2) URGE YOUR MARITIME CARRIERS TO ASSIST INDOCHINESE REFUGEE BOATS IN DISTRESS AS REQUIRED BY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO INCLUDE PICKING UP THE REFUGEES IF THE BOAT IS UNSEAWORTHY.

THE INAUGURATION OF RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS BY OTHER COUNTRIES FOR INDOCHINESE WILL ALSO HAVE THE IMPORTANT EFFECT OF DEMONSTRATING TO THE AMERICAN CONGRESS AND PUBLIC THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHARES OUR HUMANITARIAN CONCERN ON THE ISSUE.

I AM KEENLY AWARE THAT GREAT BRITAIN HAS IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES OF ITS OWN WITH CLOSE HISTORICAL TIES TO GREAT BRITAIN. HOWEVER EVEN A SMALL QUOTA FOR INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEES TO MEET THE PRESENT EMERGENCY WOULD BE VERY USEFUL AND OF SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE BEYOND THE SMALL NUMBER OF REFUGEES YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO ACCEPT. SHOULD YOU DECIDE SUCH A SMALL PROGRAM IS FEASIBLE, MY STAFF HERE AND OUR EMBASSIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WOULD BE OF ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE.

I LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING WITH YOU AGAIN SOON.

3. ORIGINAL OF LETTER BEING POUCHED TO EMBASSY ATTENTION POLITICAL COUNSELOR SULSER FOR DELIVERY TO FCO. VANCE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE306257
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LROSENBLATT:CML
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770480-0064
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771220/aaaaaquf.tel
Line Count: 163
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0ab6cafd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN HA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LONDON 20502
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 136950
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: LETTER FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN TO FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN
TAGS: SREF
To: LONDON
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0ab6cafd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009